

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /023 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/APU:RCFELDER

APPROVED BY ARA/LA/APU:FVORTIZ

S/S-O:R KUCHEL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ASEC, AR

SUBJECT: EGAN MURDER U.S. PRESS COVERAGE

REF: B.A. 1430

1. THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF MARCH 2 N.Y. TIMES ARTICLE
DATELINED BUENOS AIRES:

QUOTE. THE KILLING OF JOHN PATRICK EGAN, CONSULAR AGENT,
MAY BE THE FIRST OF SEVERAL KIDNAPPING AND ASSASSINATION
ATTEMPTS AGAINST UNITED STATES OFFICIALS IN ARGENTINA,
ACCORDING TO SOURCES AT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY HERE.

MR. EGAN WAS FOUND SHOT TO DEATH LAST NIGHT TWO DAYS AFTER
HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY LEFTIST PERONIST GUERRILLAS. THE
62-YEAR-OLD CONSULAR AGENT SERVED IN CORDOBA, AN INDUSTRIAL
CITY 430 MILES NORTHWEST OF THE CAPITAL.

QUOTE. WE HAVE HAD THE MOST DISTURBING REPORTS IN THE
LAST FOUR OR FIVE DAYS THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE I HAVE BEEN
HERE, UNQUOTE SAID AN EMBASSY OFFICIAL WHO HAS SERVED
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IN ARGENTINA SINCE LAST YEAR.

THE EMBASSY OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE REPORTS, WHICH PRECEDED THE KIDNAPPING OF MR. EGAN, HAD COME FROM POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY SOURCES.

DESPITE SUCH INFORMATION, THE POLICEMEN WHO NORMALLY GUARDED MR. EGAN WERE REMOVED FROM HIS HOME LAST SUNDAY AFTER A POLICE OFFICER FROM THE PRECINCT IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD WAS KILLED BY LEFTIST GUERRILLAS.

ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, THE ACTING GOVERNOR OF CORDOBA, RAUL LACABANNE, INFORMED THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT AFTER THE KIDNAPPING THAT HIS FORCES WERE OVEREXTENDED LOOKING FOR THE GUERRILLAS WHO HAD SHOT THE POLICEMAN. BUT HE DID NOT INFORM THE EMBASSY EARLIER THAT MR. EGAN'S SECURITY GUARDS HAD BEEN REMOVED.

CORDOBA POLICE SOURCES LAST NIGHT DISCLOSED A NOTE SIGNED BY MR. EGAN AND FOUND IN A BAR AT ABOUT 9 P.M. ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE HE WAS SHOT.

THE NOTE, PRINTED IN BLOCK LETTERS AND ADDRESSED TO THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR, ROBERT C. HILL, REPEATED AN EARLIER DEMAND BY THE GUERRILLAS, KNOWN AS THE MONTONEROS, FOR INFORMATION ON SEVERAL OF THEIR MEMBERS WHO ALLEGEDLY WERE QUOTE KIDNAPPED UNQUOTE BY THE POLICE.
(TEXT OF NOTE OMITTED)

MR. EGAN'S DEATH BROUGHT TO 50 THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED THIS YEAR IN POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN ARGENTINA.

A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE CONSULAR AGENT'S BODY WAS FOUND, THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT THREE POLICEMEN HAD BEEN KILLED BY GUERRILLAS IN BUENOS AIRES. A SOLDIER WAS KILLED BY A MINE IN TUCUMAN, A NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE WHERE 5,000 SOLDIERS, BORDER GUARDS AND FEDERAL POLICEMEN HAVE BEEN SEARCHING MOUNTAINOUS JUNGLE TERRAIN FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED MARXIST GUERRILLAS BELONGING TO THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY.

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ALSO YESTERDAY, THE MONTONEROS KIDNAPPED HUGO ALBERTO ANZORREGUY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MR. EGAN WERE UNCERTAIN TODAY. ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE ASKED HIS WIDOW, CYRILA LEONARD, TO ALLOW A SMALL PRIVATE BURIAL TO TAKE

PLACE TOMORROW TO FACILITATE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. BUT
THE SERVICES MAY BE HELD LATER TO GIVE MR. EGAN'S
RELATIVES TIME TO ARRIVE FROM THE UNITED STATES.

THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER
ANY ADDITIONAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR
ITS PERSONNEL, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT STAFF MEMBERS HAVE BEEN
ASKED TO CURTAIL SOCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR AN INDEFINITE
PERIOD.

THE UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC MISSION HERE HAD ALREADY
BEEN CUT BY ALMOST HALF AFTER THE KIDNAPPING AND WOUNDING
LAST APRIL OF ALFRED A. LAUN, AN INFORMATION SERVICE
OFFICER IN CORDOBA. MR. LAUN WAS RELEASED BY HIS CAPTORS,
WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, AND
IMMEDIATELY LEFT THE COUNTRY. UNQUOTE.

2. WASHINGTON POST, MARCH 2, DID NOT CARRY STORY ON EGAN
MURDER.

3. PREVIOUS POST, TIMES AND WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLES
ON THIS MATTER WILL BE TRANSMITTED MARCH 3 THROUGH USIS
CHANNELS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, MURDER, PRESS COMMENTS, TEXT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE046715
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RCFELDER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750073-0446
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750390/aaaaddru.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 1430
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by MarshK0>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2004 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGAN MURDER U.S. PRESS COVERAGE
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, AR, US, NEW YORK TIMES, (EGAN, JOHN P)
To: BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006